Designing the Historical Area of Cumhuriyet Street in Erzurum

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Abstract
The study covers a part of Cumhuriyet Street of Erzurum. Diversity of recreational, commercial, religious, cultural, historical and residential uses along the area of this street has turned the Cumhuriyet Street into one of the streets attracting the highest number of people and tourists. The main aim of this study is to increase the quality of life and the ideal space design in this part of the city, to offer urban designs suitable for all segments of the society, to produce various units for people to use these spaces, and to suggest changes in existing areas. In the first stage of the design, the existing entrances of the study area including squares, streets, underpasses, and overpasses were identified. The main challenge in this plan manifests when minimal manipulation occurs in the historical and valuable urban space, which finally helps create a proper and valuable framework befitting this urban space. In this study, the main concept is to protect the historical and cultural space and to bring the existing cultural value to the fore to be addressed with urban landscape design approaches. In the landscape design project, for which a proposal was prepared, the details of new squares, buildings, facades, sidewalks and original reinforcement elements were prepared. In the design of this original project, the features of the existing historical buildings and the design criteria of important squares are also included. In this approach, existing historical artifacts are completely preserved and the new urban buildings are designed completely different from the historical context of the city. In this context, innovative design approaches and urban design suggestions were developed specific to the work area. The most important suggestion is to combine the Çifte Minareli Medrese and the Castle on the upper platform, designing a city square and passing the riding road under it.

1. Introduction
Streets and urban squares play an important and special role from a cultural, political, social and urban perspective as public urban spaces over time. The role and position of the street and the square in different eras and in different intellectual and temporal periods, from the role of movement and traffic to the breadth of governmental and cultural organs and in recent times the place of social interactions has taken different faces. Despite the different functions of the street and the square, what has remained unchanged over the centuries is the generality of these spaces, which belong to all inhabitants of the city and the presence of the people contributes to the pleasantness and liveliness of this public space (Golchin and Esmaipour 2014). Apart from the ability to separate different parts of the city, urban squares and streets continuously create the cohesion of the city, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and thus provide an arena for strengthening the relationship between man and the surrounding urban environment. In fact, if we accept that an important part of the social and cultural interactions occurs in the urban spaces, the role of public spaces in strengthening the social and cultural foundations of the city will become undeniable (Sheikhbagloo and Soltani, 2009, p.67-85). Cities with a favorable visual environment are able to expand the aesthetic experience of citizens, promote the mental image of society from themselves, and strengthen their civic pride; also, by elevating the city nationally and internationally, the city’s competitive ability to attract more capital and creative strata increases as much as possible (Rafieian et al., 2013: 90).

The design scope of this thesis is a part of Cumhuriyet Street in Erzurum, which has unique features. This street is one of the most important and main streets in Erzurum, which has different potentials of dense and non-dense commercial, service and religious-recreational activities. Given that the main core of the city formation is located next to this street and includes most of the historical buildings and squares of the city in different periods, the combination of these potentials will attract many people and tourists at different times. This thesis seeks a plan to create order and visual organization of the street body and gain the satisfaction of the users of this city street; it also tries to present ideas and design patterns of Cumhuriyet Street, considering the general expectations of people and residents and users of the street, providing a basis for attracting more people and tourists to the city to promote the visual quality of urban streets in order to organize the desired visual streets of the Cumhuriyet Street.

2. Background
Early studies on the quality of urban life in the cities and developed, developing, and newly Industrialized countries have been considered since the 1970s. Previous research and endeavors have been conducted by Western world scholars (Campbell et al., 1976) in various disciplines such as sociology and psychology. Various researchers have tried to compare and evaluate the quality of urban life quality in different geographical areas using indicators. On the other hand, there has been little documented research on the urban
life quality in Asia, and perhaps one of the important reasons for such attention to the quality of urban life can be found in the answer to the question of “optimal allocation of scarce urban resources”.

3. Methodology

In the present study, a qualitative study of the historical fabric with an inferential approach was used. The necessary theoretical foundations were prepared by the library method and the historical-interpretive method was used to study the historical capabilities of Erzurum squares and urban spaces. In this regard, in order to plan a proposed landscape for the area of Cumhuriyet Street in Erzurum, the existing squares and historical monuments were identified and examined; then, the related diagrams, functions, preliminary and final plans, planting plans and 3D plans of the reinforcing elements in the planning process using architectural software including 3D Max were provided. Erzurum is one of the big and old cities of Anatolia. This city was established on a sloping surface at the foot of Palandöken Mountain and on the edge of a wide plain in the upper basin of the Euphrates River. The city is a settlement where important economic, social, and political events of the period took place in the historical process since its establishment (Doganay, 1982).

Erzurum is one of the valuable and historical cities of the Eastern Anatolia, which attracts many tourists every year and has the potential for historical tourism and winter tourism. Some work has been done in the field of winter tourism, but not much has been done about history tourism. Paying attention to the fact that most of the historical buildings of Erzurum are within the scope of Cumhuriyet Street, giving importance to this street and making a suitable design for this valuable area can attract many tourists to this part of the city. Tourism statistics show that the tourism sector is popular in this city. Every tourist without exception visits this street and in addition to the tourists, the citizens and especially the young people spend most of their time in this area, especially since the hotels, shopping centers, restaurants, cafes, entertainment and all service centers are located on this street. Therefore, with a purposeful design, this area can attract more tourists and locals than before and turn into a more vibrant and cheerful space day and night (Alpaslan 2011).

4. Study Results and Discussion

Cumhuriyet Street is the main axis of the city in different periods of Erzurum history and Erzurum Castle is the primary core of the city (Kördğil, 2018), located in the northeast of the street. One of the most important international entrances to the city is the “Gate of Tabriz”, which is located at the eastern end of this street and in connection with the important elements of Erzurum City (Pamuk, 2007) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Plan area in the historical fabric of Erzurum City and the location of historical monuments and constructs in relation to it

The main purpose of the design is to study the existing potentials of the site to analyze the strengths of the elements available on the project site in order to influence them in the new design of this important urban space (Figure 3). The first stage of the design was to identify the existing accesses, including squares, streets, alleys, underpasses, and overpasses on the site. The most important and the main access to the site as well as Erzurum City is Cumhuriyet Street, along which the initial core of the city has been formed. Its formation history includes a narrow access from the middle of the historical core of the city to the present day, affected by the widening of the city, accompanied by modernization as one of the most important and main elements of this city. Therefore, its physical and value maintenance is one of the design requirements (Pashaei and Yilmaz, 2021).

Figure 3. Location of accesses in the area of Cumhuriyet Street

Adjacent to Cumhuriyet Street, which is both a riding and a pedestrian street, a new sidewalk was considered on both sides of the street for the maximum conflict with the existing texture in the new design. This new route starts from the west of Cumhuriyet Street with a gentle slope in the form of a ramp from the sidewalk. In addition to the role of sidewalks, pauses for the people to use the views of squares and historical buildings and squares, as well as new spaces and buildings have been designed to create new spaces from a new angle. The desired path before the Yakutiye Mosque in the form of an overpass is connected to the new building in front of Lala Pasha Mosque and due to the observance of the landscape of historical buildings (Lala Pasha Mosque and Yakutiye Medrese), it reaches the ground level by the stairs and elevators. After that, the zigzag path continues on the ground floor and at the intersection of “Ali Bavi” street with Cumhuriyet Street, from the second floor of the building, located on the east side of Lala Pasha Mosque; the path starts again with a slope and is connected to the new square in front of the castle through an overpass and new buildings (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The proposed route in the design area, considering the location of historical monuments in the fabric

At the beginning of the route and in the west of Cumhuriyet Street, a new square has been formed, a part of which is considered as an icerisking rink in winter and a square and an urban open space in summer. Along the sides of the street, small squares have been created. A new design has been executed in the square between Yakutiye Medrese and Lala Pasha Mosque. Eventually, before reaching the Ulu Mosque, Cumhuriyet Street passed through the underground to the Tabriz Gate, and the space between the Cifte Minareli and the Ulu Mosque has been integrated to the south of the street and the castle to the north of Cumhuriyet Street, turning into a big urban square with designing a new view to house many recreational and social activities (Figure 5 and 6).
The main challenge in this plan is to have the minimum intrusion in the historical and valuable urban space, and finally to create a proper design plays a marginal role by creating a new winding access (zigzag) path, maintaining a straight path and retreats at various points, and never threatens the original form of the historical fabric (Figure 7).

Figure 5. Map of formation of the largest city square before and after turning Cumhuriyet Street into an underpass in front of the castle

Figure 6. Formation of the largest city square before and after turning Cumhuriyet Street into an underpass in front of the castle

The main challenge in this plan is to have the minimum intrusion in the historical and valuable urban space, and finally to create a proper and valuable basis for this urban space. The new design plays a marginal role by creating a new winding access (zigzag) path, maintaining a straight path and retreats at various points, and never threatens the original form of the historical fabric (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Location of the presented plan in the historical fabric of Erzurum City with the aim of respecting the heritage identity of historical buildings

5. Conclusion

Erzurum, like other historical cities, has been expanding and stabilizing in different historical periods. In all of these periods, along with important governmental, cultural and social elements, squares and spaces with the function of important human gatherings (for gathering military forces, holidays, national celebrations, and etc.) have been created. Considering that the dimensions of the city was constantly changing (due to war, peace, tranquility, and etc.), the way we looked at these open spaces and squares was different and caused a variety of squares so that some squares were designed and some were present just for using open space. In this design, with the main approach of preserving and rehabilitating existing squares and open spaces and historical buildings, new buildings and squares have been planned to meet the functions and urban needs of people and tourists. New spaces with social, cultural, recreational, administrative, residential, tourist, and other functions have been designed in a modern and neutral form to respect and increase the value of existing historic buildings and urban squares. The approach of this design is a modern approach with respect and preservation of the historical and valuable structure of the city. Without this approach, a city with this winding history, different layers and periods cannot be displayed in one perspective.

6. Results of the study and design of squares, buildings and accesses

• The new design is a presentation of the cold, mountainous, and historical environmental conditions of the Erzurum City.
• The new plan is to represent the different layers and periods of historical reconstruction of the city in different squares and urban spaces and structural changes in the shape and form of Erzurum. Because of its special strategic position, Erzurum has witnessed so many historical events and demolitions and reconstructions in a way that just few cities in the world have undergone such intermittent changes.
• The principles and approach of the proposed plan are respecting and preserving the valuable historical structure of the city.
• Reducing urban pedestrian traffic is possible by designing a new winding sidewalk and transferring some tourist recreational functions around this proposed new route.
• Increasing the density of people and tourists without congestion on Cumhuriyet Street is possible by increasing the length of the sidewalk and creating a pause in the newly designed route.
• Designing new and old squares and creating new views on the horizon and height in the new direction increases the ability to attract more people and tourists.
• Giving the maximum views to old and historical squares and buildings without interfering with them by preserving and reviving them with a newly designed pedestrian path is possible according to the main discussion of this research (i.e., square).
• Expansion of the squares and functional spaces for the cultural and social issues in the square in front of the castle is possible by crossing Cumhuriyet Street in the form of an underpass across Ulu Mosque and Çifte Minareli Medrese.

All existing functions of the fabric are located in new buildings, including residential, commercial, service, recreational, cultural, residential, and other ones.

7. Reference